

Remarks

The above Amendments and these Remarks are in reply to the Office Action mailed October 12, 2005. A Petition for Extension of Time is submitted herewith, together with the appropriate fee.

I. Summary of Examiner's Rejections

Prior to the Office Action mailed October 12, 2005, Claims 1-24 were pending in the Application. In the Office Action, Claims 1, 6, 7, 10, 11, 17 and 24 were objected to for various informalities. Claims 1 and 11 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and claim that which Applicant regards as the invention. Claims 1-6, 8-16 and 18-22 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as being anticipated by Bellamy et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,944,655, hereinafter Bellamy). Claims 7, 17 and 23 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Bellamy in view of Ambler et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,393,456, hereinafter Ambler). Claim 24 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Bellamy in view of Ambler and further in view of Stefaniak (U.S. Patent No. 6,550,054).

II. Summary of Applicant's Amendment

The present Response amends Claims 1, 6, 7, 10, 11, 17, 23 and 24, leaving for the Examiner's present consideration Claims 1-24. Reconsideration of the Application, as amended, is respectfully requested. Applicant respectfully reserves the right to prosecute any originally presented or canceled claims in a continuing or future application.

III. Claim Objections

In the Office Action mailed October 12, 2005, Claims 1, 6, 7, 10, 11, 17 and 24 were objected to for various informalities.

Accordingly, Claims 1, 6, 7, 10, 11, 17 and 24 have been amended as shown above to correct the informalities therein. Reconsideration thereof is respectfully requested.

IV. Claim Rejections under 35 U.S.C. §112

In the Office Action mailed October 12, 2005, Claims 1 and 11 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and claim that which Applicant regards as the invention.

Accordingly, Claims 1 and 11 have been amended as shown above. Applicant respectfully submits that Claims 1 and 11, as amended, conform to the requirements of 35 U.S.C. 112, and reconsideration thereof is respectfully requested.

V. Claim Rejections under 35 U.S.C. §102(e)

In the Office Action mailed October 12, 2005, Claims 1-6, 8-16 and 18-22 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as being anticipated by Bellamy (U.S. Patent No. 6,944,655).

Claim 1

Claim 1 has been amended to more clearly define the embodiment therein. As amended, Claim 1 defines:

1. *(Currently Amended) A collaboration system that allows the exchange of data between participants in an electronic commerce environment, comprising:
a plurality of collaboration spaces for an exchange of data between a plurality of electronic participants, wherein each of the plurality of collaboration spaces defines rules governing both the exchange of the data and a role of each of the plurality of participants, and wherein each collaboration space is accessible to the plurality of participants using any of a plurality of business protocols;
a collaboration hub for the transfer of data between the plurality of participants and the plurality of collaboration spaces, wherein the collaboration hub includes a plurality of business protocol handlers for handling different business protocols, and wherein each combination of a particular collaboration space and particular business protocol is associated with a unique uniform resource locator; and
a hub transport that is used by a participant to exchange data with another participant via the collaboration hub and in accordance with the rules of a particular collaboration space, wherein each of the participants specify a particular business protocol and a particular*

collaboration space by communicating with the collaboration hub using the unique uniform resource locator for that collaboration space and business protocol combination.

Claim 1, as currently amended, defines the system as comprising a plurality of collaboration spaces, and a plurality of business protocol handlers for handling different business protocols. An electronic participant can exchange data with another participant via the collaboration hub by communicating with the collaboration hub using a unique uniform resource locator for their chosen collaboration space and business protocol combination. Applicant respectfully submits that these features are not disclosed by the cited references.

The advantages of the embodiment currently defined by Claim 1 include that each collaboration space can support a data exchange or electronic conversation over multiple business protocols. Depending on the business protocol being used by a participant, the participant accesses the conversation space using a uniform resource locator (URL) assigned to that collaboration space/business protocol combination. When the system receives a message on the appropriate URL, it automatically knows (a) which collaboration space the message should go to, and (b) which business protocol is being used. With this information, the system can invoke the necessary business protocol handler to handle the message. As a result, as long as the participant uses the appropriate URL, then the system does not care which business protocol the participant uses. This technique allows multiple participants to exchange data with one another even though they (the participants) may themselves use different business protocols. The technique also allows a single collaboration space to support multiple streams of data exchange, or multiple electronic conversations by using multiple URLs.

Bellamy discloses a device and method for facilitating user-defined structured forms of an online conversation. As disclosed therein, the system enables users to define their own genres, (such as a debate genre in which users can participate in a formal debate online), including rules of interaction, which specify what users of a given genre can do and when, as well as rules of enforcement, which specify what users are not supposed to do, when, and what happens when they break the rules. (Column 3, lines 30-38). The system also provides dynamically updated graphical representations of the state of genre instances. These graphical representations show both who is doing what (e.g., the user represented by the yellow dot is asking a question); as well as what

particular users should be doing (e.g., providing an indication of whose turn it is to speak in a debate genre). (Column 3, lines 62-67). Users can modify the rules of a given genre while they are using an instance of it. For example, if users of a debate genre find that the maximum allowable length of postings is too short, they can increase this value. Users can also add rules, such as to allow users of a lecture genre request clarifications at any time, even during the speaker's formal presentation period. (Column 3, lines 48-53).

Applicant respectfully submits that, as described above, Bellamy appears to disclose a system for allowing users, i.e. *real people*, to interact with one another in an online conversation. Furthermore, the conversations appear to be *spoken conversations* between the various users. Claim 1 has been amended to clarify that the participants therein are *electronic participants*, and that they use a plurality of *business protocols* to communicate with one another. Claim 1 has been amended to further define that the system comprises a plurality of collaboration spaces. Each collaboration space is accessible to the plurality of electronic participants using any of the plurality of business protocols. The collaboration hub includes a plurality of *business protocol handlers* for handling the different business protocols, wherein each combination of a particular collaboration space and particular business protocol is associated with a *unique uniform resource locator*. Each of the participants specify a particular business protocol and a particular collaboration space by communicating with the collaboration hub using the unique uniform resource locator for that combination. In this manner, the participants can exchange data with one another even though they themselves may use different business protocols. Applicant respectfully submits that these features are neither disclosed nor suggested by Bellamy.

In view of the above comments, Applicant respectfully submits that Claim 1, as currently amended, is neither anticipated by nor obvious in view of the cited references, and reconsideration thereof is respectfully requested.

Claim 11

The comments provided above with respect to Claim 1 are hereby incorporated by reference. Claim 11 has been similarly amended to more clearly define the embodiment therein. For similar reasons as provided above with respect to Claim 1, Applicant respectfully submits that

Claim 11, as amended, is likewise neither anticipated by, nor obvious in view of the cited references, and reconsideration thereof is respectfully requested.

Claims 2-6, 8-10, 12-16 and 18-22

Claims 2-6, 8-10, 12-16 and 18-22 are not addressed separately but it is respectfully submitted that these claims are allowable as depending from an allowable independent claim, and further in view of the comments provided above. Applicant respectfully submits that Claims 2-6, 8-10, 12-16 and 18-22 are similarly neither anticipated by, nor obvious in view of the cited references, and reconsideration thereof is respectfully requested.

It is also submitted that these claims also add their own limitations which render them patentable in their own right. Applicant respectfully reserves the right to argue these limitations should it become necessary in the future.

VI. Claim Rejections under 35 U.S.C. §103(a)

In the Office Action mailed October 12, 2005, Claims 7, 17 and 23 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Bellamy (U.S. Patent No. 6,944,655) in view of Ambler (U.S. Patent No. 6,393,456). Claim 24 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Bellamy in view of Ambler and further in view of Stefaniak (U.S. Patent No. 6,550,054).

Claims 7, 17, 23 and 24 are not addressed separately but it is respectfully submitted that these claims are allowable as depending from an allowable independent claim, and further in view of the comments provided above. Applicant respectfully submits that Claims 7, 17, 23 and 24 are similarly neither anticipated by, nor obvious in view of the cited references, and reconsideration thereof is respectfully requested.

It is also submitted that these claims also add their own limitations which render them patentable in their own right. Applicant respectfully reserves the right to argue these limitations should it become necessary in the future.

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Response to OA dated: October 12, 2005
Response/Amendment dated: March 13, 2006

VII. Conclusion

In view of the above amendments and remarks, it is respectfully submitted that all of the Claims now pending in the subject patent application should be allowable, and reconsideration thereof is respectfully requested. The Examiner is respectfully requested to telephone the undersigned if he can assist in any way in expediting issuance of a patent.

Enclosed is a PETITION FOR EXTENSION OF TIME UNDER 37 C.F.R. §1.136 for extending the time to respond up to and including March 13, 2006.

The Commissioner is authorized to charge any underpayment or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 06-1325 for any matter in connection with this response, including any fee for extension of time, which may be required.

Respectfully submitted,

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